

Medicaid Provider Requests for Sign Language Interpreters

Frequently Asked Questions

Topics

- [Checking status of a request and notifications](#)
- [Communications and contact information](#)
- [Master Interpreter Request Form for Medical](#)
- [Eligibility and who can use the HCA Interpreter Services Program](#)
- [Enrolling and access to ProviderOne](#)
- [Reimbursement process](#)
- [Submitting requests and using ProviderOne](#)
- [Types of appointments and interpreters](#)
- [Resources](#)

Checking status of a request and notifications

1. Will providers be sent status notifications about their requests?

Yes, but it is different than you are used to. You can log into ProviderOne and [check the status of a request](#) at any time. HCA is not using a centralized vendor for sign language requests so you will not get the automated updates that you did with Universal Language Service. HCA is using the Prior Authorization system within ProviderOne and letters are sent when the status of the request changes from pending, approved, and denied. These notices are automated and sent via fax or mail like all other prior authorization notifications. HCA will send a letter when your request has been:

- Pended for more information: a letter is sent with the needed information listed.
- Denied: a letter is sent with the denial reason listed.
- Approved and an interpreter is assigned: a letter is sent with the assigned interpreter listed.
- Approved and the assigned interpreter changed: a letter is sent with the new interpreter listed.

2. What should I do if I check the status of my request and it shows an error status?

You do not need to do anything. The error is in the system and will be cleared by HCA staff. This is typically completed within 2 business days. You do not need to take any action and **you should not submit a duplicate request.**



3. What happens if my request is denied?

Only Medicaid providers who are providing covered services to a Medicaid eligible client can use [HCA Interpreter Services program](#). Please see *What clients are eligible for Interpreter Services*. Requests that are for a client who is not eligible will be denied and these requests are not eligible for reimbursement.

4. Why would my request be rejected?

If **any of the** required information is **entered** incorrectly in **ProviderOne**, your request **will be rejected**. You will receive a letter explaining it was rejected and you will need to submit a new request. Please see step by step instructions on [how to submit a request in ProviderOne](#).

Examples of things that would cause a request to be rejected:

- Incorrect Procedure Code or Modifier.
- Appointment date in P1 does not match appointment date on the [Master Interpreter Request form for Medical](#)
- Units in P1 do not match length of time on the Appointment date in P1 does not match appointment date on the [Master Interpreter Request From for Medical](#)

5. What if my request is in Requested or Referred status?

We will work on your request until the day of the appointment. The status will stay in Requested/Referred until an interpreter is assigned. Once an interpreter is assigned, the status will change to approve and you will receive a letter with the name of the assigned interpreter. At any point in time you can cancel and utilize the [reimbursement process](#).

6. If a sign language interpreter is not available for the date requested, is it permissible to reschedule a non-urgent appointment to a different date?

Yes! This is one of the recommendations to assure your client is able to have the appropriate and needed language access services during their healthcare appointments. You must notify HCA so that your request for an interpreter can be updated to the new date.

7. Should I notify my client when an interpreter is assigned?

Yes! Letting your client know if an interpreter is assigned and who the interpreter is will increase your ability to communicate effectively with your client. This also helps the client share their preferences and communication needs with you. You will receive an automated letter from the ProviderOne system when an interpreter has been assigned.

8. Do I need to encrypt or use secure email when contacting HCA?

You must always use secure email when sending PHI, this is a requirement of HIPAA

9. Can this program be used for clients with primary insurance?

Yes, as long as the client is Medicaid eligible with a covered benefit service package. Please see *What clients are eligible for Interpreter Services?*



10. Can we still request sign language interpreters through Universal?

If you want to use the [HCA Interpreter Services program](#) and receive a Sign Language interpreter for free, you cannot request the sign language interpreter through Universal. You can continue to use Universal and all other language access agencies to request interpreters at your own cost.

11. Will the ProviderOne process be used for all requests for interpreters?

No, this will only be used for requests for sign language interpreters.

12. Are providers required to use the HCA Interpreter Services program?

No, this is an optional program to help providers save money when serving Medicaid clients. You are not required to use this program but you are required to provide language access services to your clients, as required by [Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964](#) and the [Americans with Disabilities Act \(ADA\)](#).

Communications and contact information

13. Can we sign up for email notifications to receive updates and more information?

Yes! HCA uses [GovDelivery](#) to share updates about the program including webinars and other changes.

14. Will the webinar and meeting materials be distributed or made available?

Yes, the materials are emailed to all webinar attendees and posted on the [Sign language interpreter contract transition](#) website.

15. Who do I contact at OHDD if I have questions?

Any questions related to this new process for requesting an interpreter for Medicaid clients should be directed to HCA at INTERPRETERSVC@hca.wa.gov. If you have questions specific for ODHH, you can visit their [contact us website](#).

D Request for Sign Language Interpreter form

16. How do I fill out the [Master Interpreter Request form for Medical](#)?

The first two sections of the form must be filled out. Incomplete requests will be returned to the provider to be completed. If your client needs an interpreter team or has a preference on interpreters, this needs to be included on the form. An [example of a completed form](#) is available on our website. The required fields are highlighted and completed with sample information.

17. Where do I submit the [Master Interpreter Request Form for Medical](#)?

For Medicaid requests, the form is attached to your request in ProviderOne. See *How do I attach documentation in ProviderOne?*



18. Is this form required?

Yes. HCA will not accept a request for an interpreter without this form.

19. Is there space on the form to add comments?

Yes. When you are using the form for a Medicaid request, you can write a comment anywhere on the form or attach additional pages in ProviderOne.

Eligibility and who can use the HCA Interpreter Services Program

20. Can I use the HCA Interpreter Services program for any Medicaid covered healthcare appointment?

No. HCA will NOT pay for interpreter services when:

- The interpreter is a member of the family.
- It is for an inpatient and/or hospital service.
- It is for nursing facility services.
- It is for public health agencies or hospitals (certified public expenditures)
- It is administrative services such as, but not limited to:
 - Scheduling appointments.
 - Making reminder calls.
 - Miscellaneous tasks.

21. Who is eligible to use the HCA Interpreter Services program?

HCA enrolled Health care providers who are serving a Medicaid enrolled patient. The Medicaid enrolled client must have an eligible benefit service package.

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23. What clients are eligible for Interpreter Services?

All Medicaid enrolled clients are eligible except:

- Client with out of state services
- Clients who are on spenddown that is still pending
- Clients who are institutionalized
- ERSO—Emergency & Related Services that are not prior approved
- QMB ONLY--Qualified Medicare Beneficiary
- QDWI ONLY-- Qualified Disabled Working Individual
- SLMB ONLY—Specified Low-Income Medicare Beneficiary
- TCFPO—Take Charge Family Planning Only
- GA—General Assistance

24. Can this program be used for clients who are in in-patient programs such as COPES?

No. in-patient services are not covered. You should continue to use the existing options already in place within your facility. You are required to provide language access services to your clients, as required by [Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964](#) and the [Americans with Disabilities Act \(ADA\)](#).

25. Can this program be used for dual-eligibility?

Yes, as long as the Medicaid program the client has is covered. Please see *What clients are eligible for Interpreter Services?*

Enrolling and access to ProviderOne

26. How can I enroll to become a Medicaid provider?

If you are interested in becoming an Apple Health (Medicaid) provider or need to find out if you are already enrolled, check out the [Enroll as a provider](#) website.

27. Where do I access ProviderOne?

<https://www.waproviderone.org/>. Information on how to log in and use ProviderOne is available in the [ProviderOne Provider System User Manuals](#).

28. When submitting a sign language request, do we use the same ProviderOne website where we currently check a client's eligibility?

Yes, <https://www.waproviderone.org/>.

29. Can anyone in my facility use ProviderOne?

No, only individuals who have been given access by your facility's ProviderOne system administrator can have access. Your ProviderOne system administrator can add additional users if needed. The [ProviderOne user manuals](#) and [Maintaining ProviderOne User Accounts](#) are excellent resources.



30. How does the reimbursement process work?

All requests for a sign language interpreters must be submitted through ProviderOne. If no interpreter has been assigned you can choose to cancel your request and seek reimbursement. To receive reimbursement you must:

1. Notify HCA of your request to cancel and the reason at HCASLInterpreterRequests@hca.wa.gov.
2. Pay for your own interpreter and receive proof of payment (i.e. receipt or invoice).
3. Attach you proof of payment to the reference number (prior authorization) you canceled.
 - a. HCA will review and approve or deny the request for reimbursement.
 - b. Proof of payment for paid mileage, parking, ferry and toll fees is required if applicable.
4. Submit your ProviderOne claim using the approved reference number (prior authorization).

31. Is there a deadline or cutoff for when a sign language request can be canceled in order to use the reimbursement process?

No, if an interpreter has not yet been assigned to your request, you can cancel the request at any time. In order to use the reimbursement process, you must first email INTERPRETERSVC@hca.wa.gov that you are canceling the request. Please see *How does the reimbursement process work?*

32. Is there a limit on how many requests for reimbursement can be submitted?

No, HCA's primary goal is to make sure the client has an interpreter for their healthcare appointments. Reimbursement will only be provided when the reimbursement process is followed. Please see *How does the reimbursement process work?* If a trend or unusual claiming behavior is identified, HCA will investigate and provide training, guidance, or corrective action as needed.

33. If one of my employees/clinic staff acts as an interpreter for a client, can I submit this for reimbursement?

No, HCA will not reimburse you for your employee/clinic staff time or expenses for providing interpretation.

34. If an interpreter is not available and I choose to cancel my request, is there a list of private agencies?

HCA does not have a list of private sign language agencies or interpreters within Washington State. We suggest doing your own research within your community. A few known off-contract agencies include:

- [Good Signs](#)
- [Hi5 Access](#)
- [Purple Communication for Vancouver-Portland](#)
- [Purple Communication for Seattle](#)
- [Sorenson Community Interpreter Services—Covering Spokane, Seattle and Vancouver](#)



Submitting requests and using ProviderOne

35. After I login to ProviderOne, where do I go to submit the sign language request?

“On-line Prior Authorization Submission”.

36. When can we start using the ProviderOne sign language request process?

Right now! The new process began on January 1, 2020.

37. Is the ProviderOne process temporary?

No, this is the new, permanent process for Medicaid providers to request a sign language interpreter through the [HCA Interpreter Services program](#).

38. How long will the temporary process be available?

You should begin using the permanent, ProviderOne process now. HCA will continue to accept urgent requests via email at HCASLinterpreterRequests@hca.wa.gov.

39. How do I attach documentation in ProviderOne?

On the “Submit PA Request Details” screen, click “add attachment”. Step-by-step instructions are available in the [Prior Authorization Direct Data Entry submission for Sign Language Request](#) PowerPoint.

40. What should I enter in the code qualifier field?

P – HCPCS Procedure Code. For more details see the [Sign Language Prior Authorization Submission instructions](#).

41. What should I enter in the National code field?

T1013. A “U3” modifier is required, please see *What modifiers do I need to use?* For more details see the [Sign Language Prior Authorization Submission instructions](#).

42. What modifiers do I need to use?

All requests require the U3 modifier. Second modifiers are needed for behavioral health providers. For additional details see the [Sign Language Prior Authorization Submission instructions](#).

- Mental Health providers: U9
- Substance Use Disorder providers: U8


43. What should I enter in the units field?

A unit equals 15 minutes. You must enter the number of units that equals the length of the appointment for which you are requesting an interpreter. For example, a thirty minute appointment would be two units. For additional details see the [Sign Language Prior Authorization Submission instructions](#).


44. How far in advance should I request an interpreter?

You should request an interpreter as soon as you know one is needed. A good suggestion is to request an interpreter at least four (4) weeks in advance, when possible. While last minute requests are very hard to fill, HCA will try to find an available interpreter.



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- 45. If ProviderOne accepts the client ID, do I still need to check the client's benefit service package?**
Yes. ProviderOne verifies the client has a valid ProviderOne number but it does not verify if the service you are requesting is covered under the client's plan. You must verify if the service is covered. Please see *Eligibility and who can use the HCA Interpreter Services Program*.

Types of appointments and interpreters

- 46. How long does it take for an interpreter to be assigned to a request?**
It can vary. The average timeframe is around 5 business days, but it can be longer if the request is complex. When there are limited interpreters available, HCA may need to submit the request to multiple agencies and/or interpreters which can increase the length of time.
- 47. What type of sign language interpreters are available through the HCA Interpreter Services program?**
All interpreters that are contracted under the state sign language contract are potentially available. All contracted agencies and independent interpreters are posted on the [Sign Language Interpreter Contractors](#) website.
- 48. Can we request interpreter teams for a client's appointment?**
Yes, you must document this on your [Master Interpreter Request Form for Medical](#) along with any other information the sign language agency will need to know in order to appropriately fill the request.
- 49. Can we schedule multiple/ongoing/reoccurring requests for a sign language interpreter?**
A sign language request must be submitted for each individual appointment. However, you can schedule as many individual requests as you want, up to a year in advance.
- 50. Can this processed be used for block or facility appointments?**
No. You must submit a separate request for each appointment. HCA is using the state sign language contract. Block and facility appointments are not an option in this contract.
- 51. Is this process only for healthcare appointments that need Prior Authorization/?**
No. You can request a sign language interpreter for a Medicaid covered appointment as long as the provider and client are eligible. Please see *What clients are eligible to use the HCA Interpreter Services program?*
- 52. Will this change help in assigning interpreters faster?**
Yes, using the state contract for sign language is expected to result in more requests being filled and assigning interpreters faster.
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53. How many interpreters are available and how does HCA plan to increase the interpreter pool?

HCA does not have a dedicated pool of interpreters. HCA is using the state sign language contract and all interpreters and sign language agencies contracted are available to fill requests. Currently, the [state contract](#) has 14 sign language agencies and 11 independent contracted interpreters. HCA will continue working with the [Office of Deaf and Hard of Hearing](#) on efforts to increase the pool of contracted sign language agencies and interpreters.

54. What if I have an urgent request for a sign language interpreter?

You may submit your request in the ProviderOne online request system, then send an email to our [interpreter services inbox](#) with the date of the appointment and the reference number.

55. Is there a limit on how long an appointment is when requesting a sign language interpreter?

No, as long as it is a Medicaid covered appointment, you can request an interpreter for the entire duration of the appointment. This includes long appointments such as sleep studies.

56. Can interpreters give back their jobs at any time?

Interpreters will not have the same rules or expectations that were previously in place under the [HCA Interpreter Services program](#) vendor. HCA is now using the [state sign language contract](#) and following the rules and expectations established in that contract. While there are valid reasons for an interpreter to give back a job, it is significantly less common under the [state sign language contract](#).

Resources

[Sign language interpreter contract transition](#)

[Master Interpreter Request Form for Medical](#)

[Interpreter services Program](#)

[GovDelivery](#)

[State Sign Language Interpreter Contracts](#)

[Office of Deaf and Hard of Hearing](#)

[Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964](#)

[Americans with Disabilities Act \(ADA\)](#)